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AUTHOR Chesebro, James W.
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ABSTRACT

his booklet serves the following objectives; (1) it provides an overview of the role of communication in the United States economy and labor force; (2) it characterizes developments in the discipline of communication; (3) it identifies the relationships between employment areas and communication training; (4) it offers trends and projections in employment areas directly related to communication training; and (5) it functions as a "communication careers workbook" or set of guidelines for students who want to know how courses in communication can help them to achieve career objectives. The sections are as follows: "Information Defines the U.S. Labor Market"; "Structure of the Discipline of Communication; and Careers in Communication," including discussing business, law, medicine, education, government, media, public relations and advertising, arts and entertainment, social and human services, high technology industries, and international relations and negotiations. (SR)

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Pathways to Careers in Communication

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A Publication of the Speech Communication Association

Pathways to Careers in Communication serves several different objectives. It:

- Provides an overview of the role of communication in the U.S. economy and labor force;
- Characterizes developments in the discipline of communication;
- Identifies the relationships between employment areas and communication training;
- Offers trends and projections in employment areas directly related to communication training; and
- Functions as a "communication careers workbook" or set of guidelines for students who want to know how courses in communication can help them to achieve career objectives.

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Information Defines the U.S. Labor Market

The Information Society

Today, we encounter an almost overwhelming number of messages in our everyday lives.

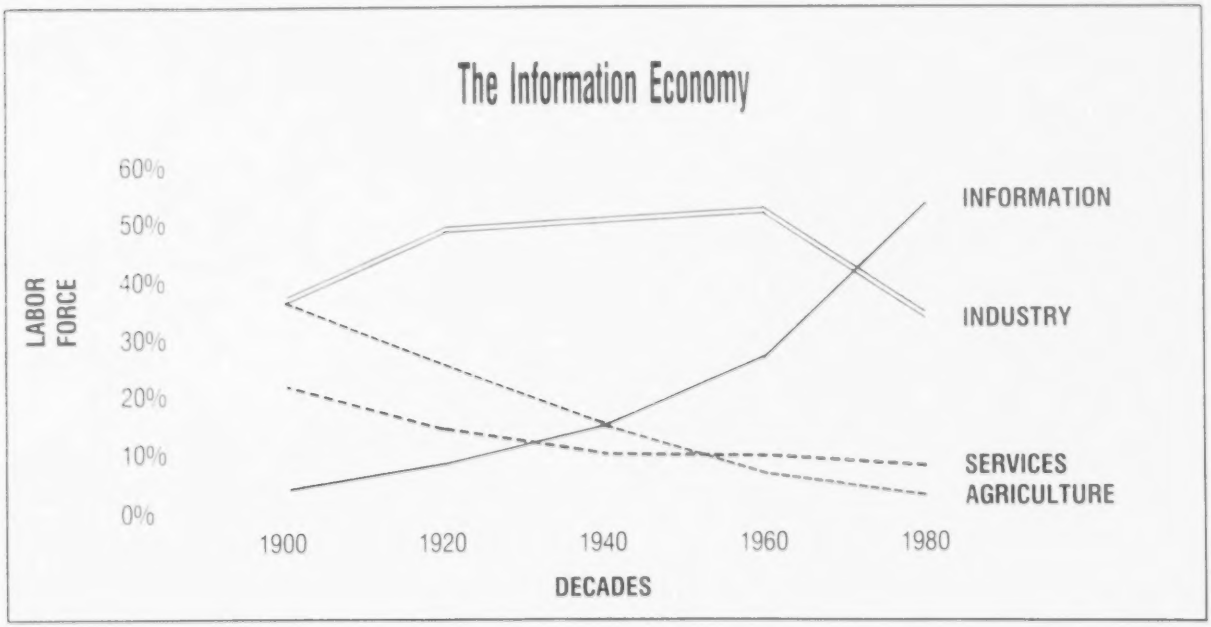
These messages emanate from our face-to-face conversations, speeches we hear, television, radios, newspapers, magazines, records, business reports, mail, telephones, government notices and forms, scientific reports, advertisements, watches and clocks, menus and recipes, billboards, books, video games, videodiscs, video- and cassette-recording systems, pay television systems, and office and home computers.

Whether at work or at home, we are now constantly dealing with information. We engage in an ongoing cycle of initiating, processing, patterning or arranging, preparing, transmitting, disseminating, retrieving, receiving, or reprocessing information.

We live in an Information Society.

The Information Economy

Information now functions as the core of the American economy and labor force. Not only do we use information, we depend upon information for our economic survival. The American economy has shifted rapidly from an agricultural base to an industrial and service economy and now to an information-based economy.



Some outstanding facts about the Information Economy:

- More than 50% of the U.S. gross national product is attributable to the development of data, exchange of information, manipulation of ideas and the transfer of numbers.
- Over 50% of the U.S. labor force is now engaged in some form of transferring, reprocessing, and transmitting information.
- Some 28% of the labor force is employed in the primary information sector of the economy.
- Some 24% of the labor force work as information processors in the industrial sector of the economy.

Moreover, communicating with others is no longer a matter of merely conveying information to others. The growth in the information economy has been matched by a similar growth in cultural diversity in the United States. Women and minorities such as blacks and Hispanics as well as a host of other minorities are increasingly entering professions in the Information Society. Communicating has become more complicated, for the same piece of information can now mean extremely different things to different groups of people. Success in information professions now requires a sensitivity to cultural differences and to the diverse meanings which can be associated with any particular word, nonverbal action, and symbol.

Overall, certain conclusions are inescapable:

- The majority of occupations now require the ability to manage and manipulate information and to communicate effectively.
- Regardless of one's chosen occupation, the ability to manipulate information and to communicate effectively are rapidly becoming an essential component of every sector of the U.S. economy.
- Virtually every individual requires training and skills as an information processor and communicator in order to exist within an Information Society.
- The changing composition of the Information Society will require that all individuals in all occupations understand and acquire the skills necessary to respond effectively in culturally diverse employment environments.

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Structure of the Discipline of Communication

A Different Kind of Communication Program Exists for Every Need

A rich diversity and variety of training in communication is offered by college and university departments throughout the United States:

- Some of these communication departments focus predominantly upon oral communication and seek to develop the skills required for a student to function as an effective communicator and persuader.
- Other communication departments possess a media orientation, preparing their students for direct entry into industries such as television, radio, and film.
- Still other communication departments provide training which would be most useful if one were working in a major corporation or institution.
- Many other communication departments focus upon communication itself, providing a theoretical framework which may be useful regardless of one's specific application.

Specializations in the Discipline of Communication

Departments of Communication typically offer one or more specializations in the following areas of study:

- Advertising and Public Relations
- Forensics, Argumentation, and Debate
- Information Sciences and Human Information Systems
- Instructional Development
- International and Intercultural Communication
- Interpersonal and Small Group Interaction
- Interpretation and Performance Studies
- Journalism
- Mass Communication
- Media and Communication Technologies and Policy
- Organizational Communication
- Political Communication
- Public Address
- Radio, Television, and Film
- Rhetorical and Communication Theory
- Speech and Language Sciences
- Theatre

Where is the Discipline of Communication Going?

If one were to ask, "What is the future of the discipline of communication as an academic field?" one of the best ways of answering such a question would be to focus upon the new academic positions created during the last several years.

New positions created in communication departments in the U.S. in 1988 and 1989 had the following emphasis:

- Oral Communication: 34%
- Mass Communication and Media Industries: 25%
- Communication Theory: 19%
- Organizational Communication: 10%
- Interpersonal communication, forensics, and others: 12%

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Careers in Communication

Communicating In All Careers

Communication is now a critical feature of all major professions in the United States. Academic courses in communication—in the form of a major, minor, or an even more focused set of courses—can enhance performance and generate success in virtually every profession.

Courses Can Have Different Names

Each department of communication has its own way of labelling and organizing the study of communication. Consult your college catalogue to see how content materials mentioned below are organized into specific courses on your campus.

Industry-Related Training

A major or concentrated set of courses in communication should probably be supplemented with a specific set of cognate courses and experiences (i.e., internships) directly related to the industry which students plan to enter. For example, courses in political science and a public relations internship may be helpful to the political communication major planning to be a lobbyist. Check with your adviser. However, as is demonstrated below, it should also be noted that many industries are now seeking employees with an extensive liberal arts background rather than technical or job-specific training.

Basic Introduction to Communication

A basic introduction to and mastery of communication are essential in every career. The following six areas are important in every career: Oral communication or public speaking; print communication or effective writing; interpersonal communication; introduction to media systems or mass communication; principles of audience analysis; and theory, research and methodology in communication. For emphasis and completeness, these six areas are reiterated for each of the careers listed below.

Having mastered the introductory courses in communication, students will want to consider the types of careers available in each industry and the specific pathways which prepare students for these positions.

Business

In a 1988 survey of 1,750 New York City corporate chief executive officers, 79% of those responding identified the "ability to express ideas verbally" as the most important of the several "qualifications and criteria" used "to screen and evaluate" new employees. The survey concluded that CEOs "look for graduates who can communicate, in person and on paper. That appears to be the universal need. . . . They don't seem to want 'salesmen,' business 'intellectuals,' or 'ready-made' business executives (with MBA in hand). They do want team-players who can express themselves with substance in their ideas and thoughts." Such expectations appear especially appropriate. Professors Rice and Bair have reported that corporate managers "spend more of their time communicating (about 75%-80%) and most of that time in oral communication (about 60% face-to-face within dyadic discussions or in meetings, or via the telephone)."

CAREERS: Sales representative or manager; middle-level executive manager; personnel manager; public information officer; industrial and labor relations representative and/or negotiator; director of corporate communication; customer service representative; employee trainer; internal newsletter editor; and buyer [also see "Law," "Media," and "Public Relations and Advertising"].

PATHWAYS TO BUSINESS CAREERS: Oral communication or public speaking; print communications or effective writing; interpersonal communication; introduction to media systems or mass communication; principles of audience analysis; theory, research, and methodology in communication; organizational communication; interviewing; conflict-resolution and negotiation; business communication; business writing; small group communication; critical listening; persuasion; ethics in communication; public relations; nonverbal communication; and discussion.

Law

The law itself has frequently been identified as a special way of talking or communicating. Professor of Law and English Language and Literature at the University of Michigan, James Boyd White has maintained the law is an art, essentially literary and rhetorical in nature, a way of establishing meaning and community through language. More functionally, other members of the judicial system have maintained that training in argumentation and debate can be critical to lawyers and to the development of the legal system itself. Following a survey of 109 of the 149 accredited law schools, Professor Scott Nobles concluded that 83% of law school representatives said that their emphasis on communication theory and skills has been "increasing" during the "past few years." Similarly, after an examination of the communication and speech techniques of lawyers in Federal District civil cases, Professors Parkinson, Geisler, and Pelias reported that there are identifiable and significant speech characteristics which co-occur with trial success. Others maintain that these language characteristics influence trial verdicts. As U.S. Supreme Court Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr. suggested: "The quality of advocacy—the research, briefing and oral argument of the close and difficult case—does contribute significantly to the development of precedents."

CAREERS: After completing a bachelor's degree in communication (a degree which is especially useful for admission to law schools but also provides useful skills after completing law school) and a J.D. degree in law, legal positions generally include: Public defender; corporate lawyer; district attorney; public interest lawyer; private practice lawyer; legal researcher; mediation and negotiation specialist; paralegal researcher; and legal educator.

PATHWAYS TO LEGAL CAREERS: A general degree in communication is often excellent undergraduate preparation for law school, but the following may be especially useful: Oral communication or public speaking; print communication or effective writing; interpersonal communication; introduction to media systems or mass communication; principles of audience analysis; theory, research and methodology in communication; legal communication; freedom of speech; media law; media regulation; critical listening; argumentation and debate; small group communication; conflict resolution and negotiation; persuasion; interviewing; rhetorical theory and criticism; ethics in communication and the law; media economics; nonverbal communication; and acting.

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Medicine

Communication affects all stages of the patient-health care provider relationship from diagnosis to therapy. As David Mechanic has reported, "illness perception and response" are "socially learned patterns developed early in life as a result of exposure to particular cultural styles, ethnic values, or sex-role socialization." And, medical schools are beginning to respond to this reality. As Dr. J. Alfred Jones and Communication Professor Gerald M. Phillips have noted in their book *Communicating with Your Doctor*, "A great many medical schools are currently modifying their curricula to include effective communication skills and patient relations."

CAREERS: Administration in medical schools; grants writer; chief of communication (public relations, training, training supervisor, etc.); communications manager for various federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health; health personnel educator (e.g., teaching public speaking courses for various health care providers); medical center publications editor; public relations officer of a hospital; medical database supervisor; hospice manager; drug rehabilitationist; various kinds of health care counseling personnel positions.

PATHWAYS TO MEDICAL CAREERS: At some institutions, medical or health communication, communication and aging, and communication issues related to death and dying are directly considered. But, more general emphasizes are also useful such as oral communication or public speaking; print communication or effective writing; interpersonal communication; introduction to media systems or mass communication; principles of audience analysis; theory, research and methodology in communication; organizational communication; interviewing; advanced interpersonal communication; discussion; conflict-resolution and small group communication; public relations; critical listening; nonverbal communication; survey of rhetoric; persuasion; and ethics of medicine and communication.

Education

The need for communication teachers continues to increase at all levels of the education process: elementary, secondary, community college, four year colleges, and M.A. and Ph.D. granting institutions. In general, the shortage of qualified teachers is being felt throughout the entire educational system. For example, for those interested in teaching at the college and university level *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported in 1989 that "Colleges and universities will need to hire 37 percent more new professors in 2003 than they have for the coming academic year." *The Chronicle* goes on to note that "especially acute shortages of faculty will occur" in the years 1996, 2000 and 2003."

In terms of the specific discipline of communication, the U.S. Department of Education has reported two important facts. First, the number of new teachers has declined by 47% since 1975. Second, the number of degrees conferred in communication has increased 122 percent since 1975 and is expected to continue.

But regardless of the subject matter, every classroom is a special communication environement and every instructor should be a facilitator of communication. Communication education specialist Donald H. Ecroyd has argued that every teacher should be "an important language model in your students' world," be "a primary source of language reinforcement and feedback," "shape the roles your children play in the classroom—perhaps in life," and "teach information and skill about the communication process."

CAREERS: Teacher (elementary, secondary, community college, four year college, university); counselor; researcher; audiovisual specialist; administrator; university information specialist; director or assistant director of a university or college news and information center; educational testing; developmental officer (fund raiser or membership drives); alumni officer; forensics coach; college placement officer; and librarian.

PATHWAYS TO CAREERS IN EDUCATION: Oral communication or public speaking; print communication or effective writing; interpersonal communication; introduction to media systems or mass communication; principles of audience analysis; theory, research and methodology in communication; communication in the classroom; cross-cultural communication (especially important given the projected increase in the multicultural and multi-ethnic composition of classrooms); linguistics; sociolinguistics; developmental communication; nonverbal communication; small group communication; oral interpretation and performance studies; forensics; family communication; advanced interpersonal communication; conflict-resolution; argumentation; ethics of communication; rhetorical theory and criticism; critical listening; discussion; persuasion; and particularly for elementary teachers, speech and hearing disorders.

Government

Communication issues challenge political leaders and our system of governance itself today.. The 86,000 separate units of government—departments, commissions, boards, bureaus—now constitute a bureaucracy which makes effective communication between public officials and citizens and even among government officials themselves more difficult. As Professors Cutlip, Center, and Broom have put it, "As the impact and extent of government increases, the need for adequate communication between public official and citizen becomes more urgent. Yet inescapable forces tend to drive them further and further apart." Yet, schemes for effective communication must be devised, a task assumed by a communication specialist. As President George Bush noted on July 5, 1989: "Effective communication in today's world is essential to international understanding and to the fostering of peace. The ability to communicate well is especially important in our rapidly changing society, where information is essential."

CAREERS: Public information officer; speechwriter; legislative assistant; campaign director; research specialist; program coordinator; negotiator; lobbyist; press secretary; and elected official.

PATHWAYS TO CAREERS IN EDUCATION: Oral communication or public speaking; print communication or effective writing; interpersonal communication; introduction to media systems or mass communication; principles of audience analysis; theory, research and methodology in communication; organizational communication; rhetorical theory and criticism; political communication; debate; persuasion; media performance; campaigns and movements; critical listening; ethics in communication; and acting.

Media

The content and business of the media industries is communication. Every variety of communication training can be reflected in these industries, from message production to audience analysis to marketing, in industries such as television, film, radio, and publishing.

Regardless of one's career objective, a media communication program can also be a valuable educational experience. Media studies need not be a vocational program. Understanding media is essential equipment for everyone living in our mediated society. Writing in ***Mass Media Careers***, Joseph Turow has noted that, "Majoring in an area relating to the mass media does not mean that you have to choose an occupation relating to the media. A well-designed communication curriculum can be a joyful liberal arts learning experience that provides problem-solving abilities and perspectives that can be used in many professions."

CAREERS: Positions in media are available in several different industries such as television; radio; film; and newspaper, magazine, and book publishing. Positions found in several of these industries include talent (actor, announcer, disc jockey, news anchor, etc.); public relations manager; editor; author, copywriter, reporter, or script writer; publisher; technician (sound, lighting, electronic, etc.); producer; business manager; researcher; account executive; floor manager; and director.

PATHWAYS TO CAREERS IN EDUCATION: Oral communication or public speaking; print communication or effective writing; interpersonal communication; introduction to media systems or mass communication; principles of audience analysis; theory, research and methodology in communication; studio and field production and direction (for both television and film); script writing; editing; persuasion; nonverbal communication; media performance; oral interpretation and performance studies; public relations; critical listening; media theory; media criticism; advertising; media research and methods; media law and ethics; campaigns; interviewing; and acting.

Public Relations and Advertising

In ***Effective Public Relations***, Scott M. Cutlip and his colleagues report that after journalism and English, communication is the most frequent major of professional public relations practitioners. In a 1988 survey of 260 large, medium, and small advertising firms, James L. Gaudino concluded, "majors emphasizing communication skills such as communication, journalism, liberal arts, English, art and public relations were the most frequently mentioned majors recruited by advertising agencies." In all, in the latest survey available in ***Employment and Earnings***, the U.S. Department of Labor projects a 35% increase in the number of public relations and advertising positions in the U.S.

CAREERS: Publicity manager; advertising or marketing specialist (private or public service corporations); press agent; lobbyist; corporate public affairs specialist; issue manager; account executive; developmental officer (fund raising and membership drives); sales manager; media analyst or planner; creative director; audience analyst (demographics, values, life-styles, etc.); news and/or informational writing; and public opinion researcher.

PATHWAYS TO CAREERS IN EDUCATION: Oral communication or public speaking; print communication or effective writing; interpersonal communication; introduction to media systems or mass communication; principles of audience analysis; theory, research and methodology in communication; organizational communication; rhetorical theory and criticism; campaigns and movements; media production and direction; critical listening; interviewing; ethics of communication; persuasion; visual communication; and nonverbal communication.

Arts and Entertainment

The arts are traditionally considered to be the oldest forms of human communication. They may have a decidedly auditory emphasis, as in the case of music. Or, the arts may have a more visual focal point, as in the case of sculpture and photography. In other cases, such as theatre, both the auditory and visual are equally critical dimensions of the artistic creation. For some, artistic creations are profoundly self-expressive. For others, the products of artists are responses, if not counter-responses, to society. Hence, Edward Albee has maintained: "The function of art is to hold a mirror up to people so they can take a hard look. . .to bring order out of chaos, coherence out of the endless static. . .to render people capable of thinking metaphorically." Regardless of one's artistic preferences, in all cases, the artistic process is profoundly a communicative activity.

CAREERS: Creative artist (playwriter, sculptor, music composer, etc.); theater or gallery manager; business manager; performer; producer; director; museum curator; development officer (fund raising or membership drives); public relations; marketing; travel agent; director of conventions; director of tourism; entertainment reviewer and critic.

PATHWAYS TO CAREERS IN EDUCATION: Oral communication or public speaking; print communication or effective writing; interpersonal communication; introduction to media systems or mass communication; principles of audience analysis; theory, research and methodology in communication; nonverbal communication; oral interpretation of both prose and poetry and performance studies; advanced interpersonal communication; critical listening; rhetorical theory and criticism; ethics of communication; public relations; and courses reflecting one's interest and specializations in entertainment-related industry areas such as theatre or music.

Social and Human Services

While people do need essential services, often the ways in which social and human services are rendered is critical, especially for younger and older people. Indeed, how services are provided can affect how people use and evaluate the services they receive. For people new to the U.S., cross-cultural sensitivity can determine how, and if, our new neighbors responds to us, as individuals, and to our country.

CAREERS: Ministry; public administration; social worker; recreational supervisor; human rights officer; community affairs liaison; peace corps volunteer; federal or state tourism director; national park service public relations specialist; philanthropic representative; and individual, teen, marriage, and family counseling.

PATHWAYS TO CAREERS IN EDUCATION: Oral communication or public speaking; print communication or effective writing; interpersonal communication; introduction to media systems or mass communication; principles of audience analysis; marital and family communication; discourse analysis; theory, research and methodology in communication; cross-cultural communication; advanced interpersonal communication; organizational communication; critical listening; interviewing; relational communication; small group communication; ethics of communication; discussion; and nonverbal communication.

High Technology Industries

"In the information age economy, the strategic resources are no longer coming out of the ground, but out of our minds. The power of ideas and information determine who has the power in the world today," noted John Sculley, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Apple Computer, Inc., in "The Power of Ideas and Information," in *Vital Speeches of the Day*.

CAREERS: User trainers in the use of communication technologies such as computers, videotex, teletext, and teleconferencing; closed circuit television producers and directors; systems analyst; technical copywriter; natural language specialist; speech synthesizer; psycholinguistic and cognitive science researcher; audio and visual computer display specialist; and performance assessor.

PATHWAYS TO CAREERS IN EDUCATION: Basic training in oral communication or public speaking; print communication or effective writing; interpersonal communication; introduction to media systems or mass communication; principles of audience analysis; critical listening; ethics of communication; organizational communication; and theory, research and methodology in communication are essential. In addition, an increasing number of communication departments are offering a specialization in information sciences, human information theory and processes and/or human communication technologies. Emphases in these departments include information and communication technology; information generation, organization and transfer; economics of information; systems theory for information service planning; principles of data base management systems; knowledge-based systems for information services; management information systems; management and information technology; human-computer communication; technical writing; the information society; information processing, etc., while others have specialized in areas such as library technologies, computer-human communication, etc.

International Relations and Negotiations

In a survey of 200 major institutions with international dimensions, including both private corporations (such as Eastman Kodak, DuPont, Prentice-Hall, Inc.), and public agencies (such as the United States Office of Management and Budget, the United Nations, etc.), the five skills ranked as most important in international relations and negotiations were "the ability to analyze information," "problem-solving skills," "empathetic and critical listening skills," "verbal skills," and "writing skills."

CAREERS: Broadcaster, reporter or member of the production teams of the several information and media agencies for any number of international associations such as the United Nations or Radio Free Europe; international corporate representative; international student tour coordinator; diplomat; foreign relations officer; host/hostess for foreign dignitaries for organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce; and foreign correspondent.

PATHWAYS TO CAREERS IN EDUCATION: Oral communication or public speaking; print communication or effective writing; interpersonal communication; introduction to media systems or mass communication; principles of audience analysis; theory, research and methodology in communication; cross-cultural communication; public relations; nonverbal communication; advanced interpersonal communication; political communication; communication policy; relational communication; and conflict-resolution and negotiation.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Contact the:

SPEECH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION
5105 Backlick Road, Building #E
Annandale, Virginia 22003
(703) 750-0533

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